

Select Annotated Bibliography on the Book of Revelation

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This bibliography is limited in several ways. First, it is confined to commentaries and books. For the hundreds or thousands of relevant journal articles and essays, readers must look elsewhere. (A good starting point is Schreiner's 2023 commentary; see below.) Trying to include websites, videos, podcasts, and the like (even limited to scholarly ones) would be overwhelming. Of course, there are many more commentaries and books which might have been added. Those seeking a more comprehensive list will appreciate the one at BestCommentaries.com.

A second restriction is that almost all of the titles listed were published within the past twenty-five years. In some respects this is an arbitrary limit, helping keep the list manageable, but it is somewhat less so considering how many were published around the year 2000 (one-third of the works listed were published in 1998–2002). Since most of these works have their own bibliography, earlier works worthy of attention can be readily identified. Another plus of restricting the list to recent titles is that most are available in digital format.

Finally, this list privileges resources useful for preaching and teaching. Most share the same purpose: to help others understand the message of Revelation and derive the spiritual blessing it offers (Rev 1:3; 22:7). There are, however, significant differences in the kinds of books listed, even when written by the same author. Some have beginning students in mind; some assume their readers know Greek. Some concentrate on broad themes, and others conduct a word-by-word investigation. Some prioritize Revelation's teaching for today,

while some focus on its relevance to the original audience. The large majority of the authors are broadly evangelical (and non-dispensational) in their approach, but they often differ in their theological traditions and convictions. This means two things: they read and apply Revelation differently, and such differences are compatible with the purpose of this list. It is not enough to consult authors with whom we agree; we should also be aware of and challenged by those with whom we disagree. All interpretations are not equally valid, but no interpretation should be exempt from critique. Preparation for preaching and teaching requires knowing the strength and weaknesses of various views, even our own.

Even with these limitations, there are dozens of additional studies that could easily have been included. Aside from trying to stay within a prescribed word count, I sought to restrict the bibliography to titles most likely to be worth the time, effort, and expense invested in them. My judgment is not based on any personal expertise in the study of Revelation, nor having read all of the resources included. Selections are based primarily on two criteria: (1) specific recommendations by those who do have relevant expertise (for example, in peer reviews and bibliographies); and (2) the general reputation of the authors, publishers, and series. Whatever shortcomings or oversights readers will discover are due to another set of limitations: my own.

Note: The annotations for the commentaries seek to identify such things as their features, format, or function. In most cases, I do not say whether an author favors a particular interpretive approach (preterist, futurist, or idealist), since nearly all of them recognize that aspects of Revelation speak to the first century, the final century, and every century in between. Offered instead is an attempt to identify qualities that might help readers decide which commentaries best suit their needs. Each is described (relative to other commentaries) as Low, Medium, or High in regard to: Practical/Pastoral Relevance; Theological/Ethical Teaching; Historical/Linguistic Interest; and Technical/Academic Style.

Commentaries

Akin, Daniel. *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*. Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary. Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2016.

Akin is one of the editors of this series designed to help ministers proclaim a message that connects the varied topics and teachings of Scripture to Christ. Each of the 32 lessons in this 384-page commentary gives the main idea of the passage, a formal expository outline, and a full sermon based on that outline. Each lesson also lists ten questions to “Reflect and Discuss.” There are occasional excurses and charts supplementing the exposition. Some of the outlines seem to impose a level of symmetry and structure on the text (aided by an abundant appropriation of alliteration!), but they are nonetheless suggestive of sermon points. The homiletical aims of this commentary (with its illustrations and “theologically driven applications”) will also be useful for teaching and leading Bible study groups.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
High	Medium	Low	Low

Aune, David. *Revelation 1-5*. Word Biblical Commentary, 52A. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.

———. *Revelation 6-16*. Word Biblical Commentary, 52B. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

———. *Revelation 17-22*. Word Biblical Commentary, 52C. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

It is hard to imagine a more detailed and thorough commentary (totaling 1,668 pp.), particularly in regard to Aune’s expertise in the Greco-Roman context. This strength is offset somewhat by the limited attention to the larger coherence and concerns of Revelation itself. The format of the series allows the reader to focus on particular interests and various aspects of interpretation: (1) select bibliography for the passage; (2) the author’s own translation; (3) text-critical issues; (4) matters of “Form/Structure/Setting”; (5) verse-by-verse comments; and (6) an “Explanation” which offers a summary/synthesis of the teachings. This format can be distracting since these different aspects are often tightly intertwined. Parenthetical references to the numerous primary and secondary sources add to the difficulty of reading volumes in this series.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Low	High	High

Beale, Gregory K. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Many regard this advanced commentary on the Greek text (1,309 pp., including 36-page bibliography and 180-page introduction) as the best commentary available. Beale delivers rich theological insights from what he calls a “redemptive historical form of modified idealism.” Nearly as detailed as Aune (Beale completed this before his volumes were published, so unfortunately he does not interact with Aune), but this analysis is more interested in the Old Testament background of Revelation. The depth of the study makes it a challenging read (although still usable for those who do not read Greek), but results will justify the effort.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	High	High	High

———. *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 552 pp.

For those wanting a more stream-lined approach (for example, this introduction is 33 pp. rather than 180 pp.) and one which does not presume any Greek, this commentary, based on the New American Standard Bible, provides an attractive option. References to much of the primary and secondary literature are gone, but it retains the heart of Beale’s more detailed version, including the focus on the Old Testament. Not a homiletical commentary, but it offers “Suggestions for Reflection” throughout, and full sentence titles for each section serve as exegetical foundations for preaching and teaching.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Medium	High	High	High

Boxall, Ian. *The Revelation of St. John*. Black's New Testament Commentaries. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006.

These highly readable and informative 363 pages replace G. B. Caird's 1966 volume in this series. Boxall provides his own translation and a paragraph-by-paragraph treatment of the text. He gives close attention to John's visionary experience on Patmos, which Boxall dates in the late 60s. Accordingly, he places less emphasis on pending Roman persecution and more on the immediate threat of compromised fidelity to Christ. Boxall is also writing on Revelation for the forthcoming International Critical Commentary.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	High	Medium

Brighton, Louis A. Revelation. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia, 1999.

A lesser-known scholar outside of Lutheran circles, Brighton offers a close reading of Revelation and thoughtful insights into its message. This 673-page volume is well described by the subtitle to this series: "A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture." The heart of the commentary is its presentation of "Christ in his exalted glory as the reigning Lord." In the commentary, Revelation is divided into five sections, with thirteen sub-sections. Each sub-section includes Brighton's translation, notes on the Greek text (with English translations), and explanatory comments. There are also excurses on sixteen various topics (for example, "The Missiology of Revelation," "144,000," "The Millennium," "The Restored Physical Creation"). A somewhat distilled version is also available (still 448 pp.). The main content stays, but gone are references to Greek vocabulary or grammar and footnotes to primary and secondary sources: *Revelation*, ed. Paul E. Deterding, Concordia Popular Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2009).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	High	Medium	High

Duvall, J. Scott. *Revelation*. Teach the Text Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.

This is part of a decidedly practical series of commentaries. Duvall takes an eclectic premillennial approach while showcasing Revelation’s abiding relevance. After a brief introduction (8 pp.) and detailed outline (9 pp.), the commentary (total of 352 pp.) is devoted to equipping those who preach or teach Revelation. It is divided into 48 sections (“preaching units”), each about six pages long. Each includes: (1) the “Big Idea” of the passage; (2) “Key Themes” contained within it; (3) “Understanding the Text,” that is, standard interpretive issues, outline of the passage, and suggestions for exposition; (4) “Teaching the Text,” with suggestions for conveying the main themes and their application; and (5) “Illustrating the Text,” with stories, object lessons, and so on. There are also 36 “Sidebars” covering various topics throughout the commentary.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
High	Medium	Medium	Low

Fanning, Buist M. *Revelation*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.

This series seems to have the right blend of exegetical and homiletical interests. The introduction (41 pp.) gives a thorough and balanced overview of the expected topics (with plentiful footnotes). Fanning recognizes the validity of other approaches but writes from a “pre-trib” dispensational stance. Each section provides the “Literary Context” (indicating its place within the larger outline); “Main Idea” (one or two sentence summary); “Translation” (paired with the next heading); “Structure” (“graphical layout” reflecting a grammatical/discourse analysis of the flow of thought); “Exegetical Outline” (detailed overview of the passage); “Explanation of the Text” (linguistic matters, historical-cultural context, inter-textual connections, etc.); and “Theology in Application” (key ideas and implications). The 624-page commentary concludes with nine pages on “The Theology of Revelation.” Fanning’s engagement with the work of other scholars (e.g., Aune, Beale, Koester, Osborne, Smalley) is

impressive. The way he draws on and responds to them adds to the value of this commentary.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	High	High

Fee, Gordon. *Revelation*. New Covenant Commentary. Eugene: Cascade, 2011.

Fee's concise introduction (11 pp.) answers the "what, why, who, and when" questions (that is, a call from the Apostle John to stay faithful in view of increasing conflict with Rome around AD 100). The commentary itself (320 pp.) is also concise, at least compared to other recent works. Revelation is organized into twelve sections, each with an introduction, the NIV translation, and discussion of the passage (by paragraphs rather than verses). Fee delivers admirably on the first aim of this commentary series (understanding the text within its own historical and literary context) but falters on the second (how it impacts "the faith and praxis of contemporary faith communities"). Three brief essays on "Fusing the Horizons" help but may leave readers wishing for more.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Low	Medium	Low

Gregg, Steve, editor. *Revelation. Four Views, a Parallel Commentary*. Revised & updated. Nashville: Nelson, 2013.

Following a thorough introduction and analysis of the history of approaches to Revelation, (nearly 60 out of a 608-page book), Gregg presents a synoptic commentary of historicist, preterist, futurist, and idealist interpretations. After the fairly harmonious interpretations of Revelation 1–3, the four views are arranged in columns, each containing comments from representatives of the approach (drawn from throughout the history of Christianity, along with recent works, for example, Ladd, Mounce, Walvoord). The editor does not present himself as a scholar, but he is clearly a capable and dedicated

student of Revelation. It is a useful tool for those wanting a convenient summary of interpretive options.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Low	Medium	Low

Hamilton, James M. *Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012.

It would be a mistake to assume that this homiletical commentary is a superficial or lightweight treatment. Hamilton's exposition is well informed and presented, covering all of Revelation in 37 sermons (10–12 pp. each). The lessons have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction shows the importance of the topic, identifies the main point, previews the structure of the passage, and considers the context of surrounding passages, the book, or wider biblical teaching. The exposition explains the structure of the passage and shows the relevance of the main point, which the conclusion restates and reinforces. The 457-page commentary has well-chosen and helpful charts and tables. Footnotes identify a broad range of primary and secondary sources. Hamilton presents alternate views on disputed aspects (for example, his gentle defense of a non-dispensational premillennial approach). Designed to help with sermon preparation, this commentary would also be an excellent resource for a Bible class or a personal study.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
High	Medium	Medium	Low

Johnson, Dennis E. *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001.

Starting with an introductory chapter proposing seven principles for reading Revelation, and concluding with a discussion of its implications, Johnson writes a highly readable and rewarding commentary. It is not a verse-by-verse treatment, but Johnson delivers detailed and substantive content (totaling 394

pp.). He concludes with a chapter asking, “What Should This Book Do to Us?” and two appendices: “A Concise Overview” (3 pp.) and “Schools of Interpretation” (14 pp.).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Keener, Craig S. *Revelation*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.

The author is well known for his scholarly publications, so some may be surprised by his ability to relate to those who preach and teach in non-academic settings. The format of this series interprets each passage in three ways: “Original Meaning” (focused on historical, literary, cultural context); “Bridging Contexts” (identifying “timeless” teachings); “Contemporary Significance” (guidance for meaningful application). The text of this 576-page commentary is based on the NIV, but various lexical and grammatical issues are raised (all Greek is transliterated). As expected of Keener, he gives ample attention to extra-biblical texts. As expected of this series, he also offers meaningful and practical insights based on that understanding.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
High	Medium	Medium	Medium

Koester, Craig R. *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

This is a much-needed replacement to the original volume in this series. Koester is remarkably comprehensive in dealing with the text of Revelation and the various ways it has been approached and interpreted by others. The breadth and depth of Koester’s 122-page introduction is striking, covering everything one expects and supplemented by an incisive history of interpretation. The bibliography is equally extensive (53 pp.). The interpretation (650 pp.) is organized into eight units, each including (1) the author’s translation, (2)

detailed verse-by-verse notes drawing on a wide variety of ancient sources, and (3) a “comment” section with a more general exposition. Koester’s focus on Revelation’s critique of the social, religious, and economic world of the late first century illuminates the ways that critique remains relevant.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	High	High

Longman, Tremper, III. *Revelation through Old Testament Eyes: A Background and Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2022.

This is only the third volume so far in a series aimed directly at preachers and teachers. Its special interest in the Old Testament is obviously well suited to Revelation. As an Old Testament scholar, Longman brings a rich knowledge and appreciation of its “allusions, references, echoes, and background” to this study. There is a brief introduction (7 pp.) and a thorough discussion of the outline and structure of Revelation (10 pp.), but the bulk of the 386-page book consists of the “Running Commentary,” discussing each verse or paragraph and highlighting (but not restricted to) the OT background. Commentaries in this series have additional features under three headings: “Through Old Testament Eyes,” elaborating on connections to the OT (a total of fourteen); “What the Structure Means,” exploring the effect of structure, context, and various literary features (a total of twenty); and “Going Deeper,” addressing theological and practical implications for readers then and now (a total of nineteen). This collection of well-chosen asides (typically a page or so each) contains some of the commentary’s best material.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Medium	Medium	High	Low

McNicol, Allan J. “Revelation.” In *The Transforming Word: A One Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by Mark Hamilton, et al., 1063–1086. Abilene: ACU Press, 2009.

This brief commentary by McNicol is as instructive as it is compact. For each book of the Bible, *The Transforming Word* provides an overview of the structure and flow, the relevant historical setting, and its theological message. It includes an outline of Revelation, a discussion of various matters related to its historical setting, a chapter-by-chapter commentary, a summary of its theological message, and brief bibliography. This one-volume edition has been reprinted in five volumes; see *The Transforming Word, vol 5: Letters to Early Churches, Romans to Revelation*, ed. Mark Hamilton, et al. (Abilene: ACU Press, 2022).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	Medium	Medium

Michaels, J. Ramsey. *Revelation*. IVP New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Characteristic of this series, Michaels presents thoughtful scholarship in the service of a succinct (265 pp.) and accessible interpretation. Michaels shows the past, present, and future relevance of the gospel proclaimed in Revelation. A digital version of this commentary (minus the 44-page introduction and outline, notes, or bibliography) can be read online at www.BibleGateway.com/resources/ivp-nt/Revelation. Michaels also wrote the short but very useful study, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, Guides to New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Medium	Medium	Medium	Low

Mounce, Robert H. *The Book of Revelation*. Rev. ed. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

This widely used commentary is by a respected evangelical scholar. Mounce takes an eclectic approach, grounded in the book's first-century setting but oriented toward yet-to-be-fulfilled prophecies (for example, the millennium). The commentary is organized by sections, with judicious comments on difficult issues. It is based on the NIV but interacts with the Greek text (transliterated except in footnotes). This edition (475 pp.) is a thorough revision of the 1977 original. Mounce previously wrote a more condensed commentary (152 pp.): *What Are We Waiting For? A Commentary on Revelation* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004; originally by Eerdmans, 1992).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	Medium	Medium

Murphy, Frederick J. *Fallen Is Babylon: The Revelation to John*. New Testament in Context. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998.

As indicated by the title of the series, Murphy places a high priority on the setting of Revelation, especially its Jewish matrix and relevance to its first audience. He presents a thorough introduction (57 pp.), with an equally thorough discussion of the text in just under 500 pages. Murphy stands in what might be called the “main stream” of the guild of New Testament scholars, avoiding extreme or idiosyncratic interpretations. For this reason, along with the clarity of his writing, Murphy will serve as useful guide for those who might feel overwhelmed by commentaries that push too hard any particular agenda or focus so much on specific details that they lose sight of the overall message.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Low	High	Medium

Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

Osborne upholds the well-deserved reputation of this series for scholarly exegesis motivated by theological interest. This is yet another major commentary (896 pp.) from a historic premillennial, eclectic perspective. After a comprehensive introduction (49 pp.), he divides Revelation into four sections followed by an epilogue (Rev 22:6–21). Each section is organized by an introduction summarizing the section, a verse-by-verse exegesis (including various interpretive options), and “Additional Notes” for textual variants and supplemental topics. The volume on Revelation in this series has since been replaced by Schreiner, 2023 (see below).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Medium	High	High	High

_____. *Revelation Verse by Verse*. Osborne New Testament Commentaries. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.

Although the projected series was cut short by Osborne’s death in 2018, this volume demonstrates his strong interest in connecting the first-century message of Scripture to twenty-first-century readers. He wanted these commentaries to be useful for personal devotional study, church groups, and sermon preparation. Despite its more popular orientation and practical aims, the volume on Revelation is neither short nor shallow (432 pp.). The scholarship of his earlier commentary is clearly visible, but the focus and style make it accessible to any interested reader.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
High	Medium	Medium	Low

Oster, Richard E., Jr. *Seven Congregations in a Roman Crucible: A Commentary on Revelation 1–3*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013.

Covering only Revelation 1–3, this 290-page study is distinguished by its emphasis on reading Revelation in view of its original setting. Oster makes extensive use of literary sources and a wide range of archaeological evidence (inscriptions, coins, monuments, etc.) with illustrations throughout. (For digital images, go to “richardoster.com” and search “color photos.”) The detailed comments make this a more advanced commentary, but it is not beyond the interested student (Greek is transliterated). Oster’s introduction (48 pp.) underscores the “anti-assimilationist theology” of John’s prophecy, and is a reliable place to begin one’s study of Revelation.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	High	High

Poythress, Vern Sheridan. *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2000.

This insightful, concise commentary (213 pp.) concentrates on the main ideas of John’s prophecies, taking an idealist amillennial approach. According to Poythress, the key to interpreting Revelation is to approach it as “a picture book, not a puzzle book.” For beginning students this would be an excellent starting point before tackling more in-depth studies. A free version of the book and a study guide are available on the author’s website: www.frame-poythress.org.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
High	High	Low	Low

Reddish, Mitchell. *Revelation*. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001.

Reddish takes seriously the content and concerns of Revelation without employing a rigid interpretive grid. The result is a commentary that can be

profitably used by anyone. It helps that, although substantive, it is a manageable 472 pages. A noteworthy feature of this series is the commitment to addressing both the “then and there” and the “here and now” aspects of interpretation. Each section has a “Commentary” portion devoted to exegetical and theological issues. There is also a “Connections” portion dealing with how the message might be applied and communicated (including suggestions for preaching). The exposition of each passage is enhanced by numerous sidebars containing supplemental historical details (along with charts, maps, photos, etc.), literary features, theological discussion, relevant quotations, and artistic images. Reddish also edited a helpful introduction to the literary context of *Revelation: Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
High	High	Medium	Medium

Resseguie, James L. *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary*.

Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009.

Most commentaries recognize the literary features and structure of Revelation, but Resseguie highlights its narrative features (for example, setting, characters, plot) and rhetorical devices (for example, metaphors, symbolism, structure). The approach is explained in the 43-page introduction, drawing on his more academic work, *Revelation Unsealed: A Narrative Critical Approach to John's Apocalypse* (Leiden: Brill, 1998). This is then applied to the text for the remainder of the 288 pages. Revelation's genre may be too complex to treat strictly as narrative; nevertheless, this analysis offers fresh insights into its themes and their significance for readers far removed from the original setting.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	High	High	High

Rowland, Christopher C. “The Book of Revelation: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections.” In *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol.12. Edited by Leander Keck, 501–743. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.

The purpose of *The New Interpreter’s Bible* is to bring scholarship to bear upon the needs of “preachers, teachers, and all students of the Bible.” It would be hard to find a more qualified scholar than Rowland, an expert on apocalyptic literature. The 56-page introduction focuses on the genre of Revelation, including a broad survey of the history of its interpretation (28 pp.). The commentary is arranged in 22 sections (not equivalent to the chapter divisions of Revelation). Each section begins with an “Overview” of the contents, along with the historical and literary context. Each sub-section starts with the NIV and NRSV text in parallel columns. The “Commentary” for each sub-section provides analysis and interpretation. “Reflections” present theological insights and implications. Some may be interested in Rowland’s shorter 1993 commentary (166 pp.). It is aimed at a broader audience (in the Epworth Commentary series) and available online at biblicalstudies.org.uk.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	High	Medium

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023.

With this commentary, Schreiner replaces the earlier work by Osborne (see above). It follows the same format: a summary of each unit of text followed by “Exegesis and Exposition” (with the author’s translation and a verse-by-verse analysis). This is where Schreiner does his best work, showing the “recapitulatory and symbolic nature” of Revelation. “Additional Notes” address grammatical matters and textual variants. This volume is virtually the same length as its predecessor (893 pp.). Aside from the added perspective of twenty additional years of scholarly publications (see the 46-page bibliography), perhaps the most noteworthy difference is Schreiner’s move away from premillennialism to “New Creation Millennialism” (where the faithful share in Christ’s reign, while the wicked are kept imprisoned with Satan before the final judgment). Schreiner has also written a shorter commentary: “Revelation,” in

ESV Expository Commentary, vol. 12, ed. Iain M. Duguid (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 525–724.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	High	High	High

Smalley, Stephen S. *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005.

The amount of research and study behind this commentary is evident throughout its 651 pages. It is not part of a series but is organized much like the Word Biblical Commentary: Translation, Textual Variants, Literary Setting, Comment, Theology. Smalley joins other recent commentators in taking a modified idealist approach, but he parts company with most in preferring an early date and identifying John as author of the Gospel and Epistles (on which he has previously written commentaries). The analysis of Greek (transliterated) may initially discourage some, but there is more here than lexical and grammatical insights. Smalley’s fascination with the dramatic storyline enhances both one’s understanding and appreciation for Revelation. Given Smalley’s interests and abilities, it is disappointing that so few pages appear under the “Theology” heading (about one page per sixteen sections). This work builds on the foundation laid in his *Thunder and Love: John’s Revelation and John’s Community* (Nashville: Nelson Word, 1994).

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Low	High	High

Thomas, Robert L. *Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1992.

———. *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1995.

Thomas offers this as the only “thoroughgoing treatment of the last book of the Bible from the perspective of dispensational, pretribulation, and

premillennial eschatology.” Even if most premillennial scholars today reject this perspective, it remains influential. Thomas intends these two volumes (524 pp. and 712 pp.) to be useful for general readers as well as scholars. Together they are organized into 23 chapters, according to major divisions of Revelation. Each chapter is divided into paragraphs, which includes Thomas’ own translation, verse-by-verse commentary, and additional notes. The frequent citations of the Greek are transliterated, and occasional lexical or grammatical analyses are usually in the notes. Both volumes have extended excurses addressing select disputed issues.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Low	High	Medium

Thompson, Leonard L. *Revelation*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.

Volumes in this series are “compact, critical commentaries” intended for a broad audience. Thompson had previously written about Revelation’s social-political context in *The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). He brings that perspective to this volume, identifying John as a wandering prophet who calls his audience to reject the ways of Roman society in view of God’s coming triumph. The introduction (27 pp.) focuses on three topics: the social-cultural context of Asia Minor, John’s identity and outlook as a “visionary” prophet, and the place of images and visions in Revelation. The exposition (using the NRSV) is organized by seven sets of visions. These are subdivided, where Thompson presents a literary, exegetical, and theological and ethical analysis of each passage comprising the larger section. The literary analysis is not as extensive as the exegetical (most verses receive close examination, displaying Thompson’s familiarity with primary sources), and the theological and ethical analysis is sometimes overshadowed by background information. Yet the dense content of this compact study (142 pp.) is impressive and makes this a useful resource.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	High	Medium

Tonstad, Sigve K. *Revelation*. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019.

This series is geared toward advanced students with the aims of providing scholarly instruction in the biblical text and bringing out their original goal: “to form the theological convictions and moral habits of their readers.” Tonstad writes from a Seventh Day Adventist background, but he largely avoids the historicist reading of certain passages important to that tradition. He does not disregard the ancient context of Revelation, but Tonstad is more interested in what he regards as its theological center: the cosmic triumph of “the Lamb that was slain” in the love of God over the power of evil. In other words, he sees a conflict that takes place on a much grander scale than one in first-century Asia Minor. The introduction (42 pp.) covers standard issues, and it is where Tonstad argues that Revelation 12 is the narrative center of the book. The commentary is divided into eleven chapters, each briefly addressing “Introductory Matters” and “Rhetorical Flow.” Then comes “Tracing the Train of Thought,” a longer paragraph-by-paragraph exploration. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of “Theological Issues.” The commentary is enhanced by photos, charts, sidebars, and the like. Perhaps its most distinctive feature is Tonstad’s challenge to conventional interpretations of divine violence and wrath. He argues that the nature of God revealed by John is ultimately non-violent and non-retributive. Regardless of the uncommon stance, Tonstad’s pursuit of an overarching and everlasting message in Revelation furnishes a theologically provocative and engaging study.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	High	High	Medium

Trafton, Joseph L. *Reading Revelation: A Literary and Theological Commentary. Reading the New Testament*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005.

This series aims for a broad understanding, based on *what* (the religious message) and *how* (the communication strategies) the biblical author wrote to the original audience. The fundamental purpose is to allow those words to be

better understood and preached or taught today. This short commentary (200 pp.) is discerning and gratifying. Following a helpful introduction (14 pp.), Trafton organizes Revelation according to its seven major literary units. The clear-headed and even-handed comments are unexpectedly detailed, supported by references to biblical and extra-biblical (primarily Jewish) texts. The commentary's value is increased by its focus on how the literary units of Revelation relate to one another and the book as a whole.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Medium	Medium	Medium

Wilson, Mark W. *Revelation*. Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Neither exegetical nor expository in its aim, this series focuses on historical setting. The book of Revelation lends itself well to this, and as director of the Asia Minor Research Center, Wilson is well qualified for the task. Due to its concentration on “background” (for example, social, political, religious), comments on the text itself are uneven. The aims of this brief commentary (160 pp.) are, however, well met with the inclusion of numerous photos, charts, maps, and sidebar explanations. Throughout the commentary, numerous “Reflections” on various topics add to its usefulness. This volume is identical to “Revelation” in *The Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, vol. 4: *Hebrews to Revelation*.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Low	Low	Medium	Low

Witherington III, Ben. *Commentary on Revelation*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Known for his series of “socio-rhetorical” commentaries on the New Testament, Witherington brings the same interests to Revelation. Based on the NRSV, he highlights various aspects of the historical context (“Closer Look”)

and discusses contemporary relevance (“Bridging the Horizons”). The volume of 326 pages includes a comprehensive introduction (50 pp.), annotated bibliography (13 pp.), and Appendix on the “Millennium” (6 pp.). This commentary upholds Witherington’s reputation as a careful scholar and skilled writer, and it should appeal to a wide audience.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Wright, N. T. *Revelation for Everyone: 20th Anniversary Edition*. New Testament for Everyone. Louisville: WJKP, 2023.

This popular series for general readers also has value for those addressing that audience. (The “20th Anniversary” commemorates the inauguration of the series, not this volume.) Wright provides his own translation, along with informed, though brief, comments. With virtually no introduction, and only 152 pages discussing the text, it is well-suited to beginning students. Wright’s engaging style, thoughtful insights, and practical orientation enhance its appeal. A glossary (15 pp.) explains even non-technical terms (for example, “miracle,” “salvation”), but oddly contains terms neither in Revelation nor in the commentary (for example, “Pharisees,” “Sadducees”). Essentially the same as the 2011 edition, it has an updated translation and a study guide/lesson plans covering Revelation in four sessions.

<i>Practical/Pastoral</i>	<i>Theological/Ethical</i>	<i>Historical/Literary</i>	<i>Technical/Academic</i>
Medium	Medium	Low	Low

Selected Introductions, Overviews, Studies

Baukham, Richard J. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. New Testament Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Boxall, Ian. *Christ in the Book of Revelation*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2021.

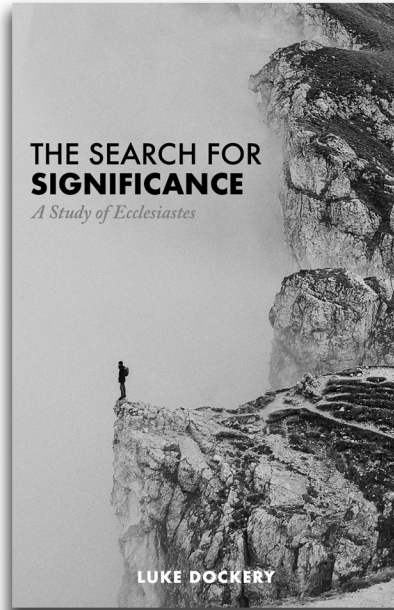
- DeSilva, David. *Discovering Revelation: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021.
- Duvall, J. Scott. *The Heart of Revelation: Understanding the 10 Essential Themes of the Bible's Final Book*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2019.
- Flemming, Dean. *Foretaste of the Future: Reading Revelation in Light of God's Mission*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2022.
- Gorman, Michael J. *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011.
- Koester, Craig. *Revelation and the End of All Things*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Marriner, Keith T. *Following the Lamb: The Theme of Discipleship in the Book of Revelation*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2016.
- Mathewson, David L. *A Companion to the Book of Revelation*. Eugene: Cascade, 2020.
- McKnight, Scot. *Revelation for the Rest of Us: A Prophetic Call to Follow Jesus as a Dissident Disciple*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023.
- Pate, C. Marvin, ed. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. Counterpoints: Bible and Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *The Joy of Hearing: A Theology of the Book of Revelation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021.
- Spilsbury, Paul. *The Throne, the Lamb and the Dragon: A Reader's Guide to the Book of Revelation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

Stewart, Alexander E. *Reading the Book of Revelation: Five Principles for Interpretation*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021.

Webster, Douglas D. *Follow the Lamb: A Pastoral Approach to the Revelation*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2014.

Wilson, Mark. *Charts on the Book of Revelation: Literary, Historical, and Theological Perspectives*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.

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